

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

S E C R E T STATE 038208

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PARM, TECH, ENRG, EG

SUBJECT: QATTARA PROJECT: VISIT OF US EXPERTS
GENEVA FOR CTB DELEGATION

1. US COMPANY (CER GEONUCLEAR) ENGAGED IN FEASIBILITY
STUDY OF THE QATTARA DEPRESSION PROJECT HAS ENGAGED
LAWRENCE LIVERMORE LABORATORY EXPERTS TO CONSULT ON
ACQUISITION OF CORE SAMPLE DATA TO BE USED IN LABORATORY
COMPUTER CODES. SINCE FEASIBILITY OF USING PEACEFUL
NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES (PNES) IS BEING INVESTIGATED, THEIR
PRESENCE COULD BE CONSTRUED AS INDICATING US INTEREST IN
USE OF PNES FOR QATTARA PROJECT.

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2. US POSITION IS THAT OUR OWN PNE PROGRAM, CARRIED OUT
JOINTLY WITH INDUSTRY OVER PERIOD OF MANY YEARS, DID NOT
PROVE OUT, AND THAT ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS OVERRIDE ANY
FORESEEABLE ECONOMIC BENEFITS. AS A RESULT, US PNE
PROGRAM WAS TERMINATED.

3. IN COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN (CTB) NEGOTIATIONS, US DELE-
GATION HAS STRESSED NEED TO PROHIBIT PNES AS WELL AS
NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING BECAUSE VALUE OF CTB WOULD BE
SERIOUSLY UNDERMINED BY ASSOCIATED MILITARY BENEFITS AND

NON-PROLIFERATION ASPECTS, IF PNES WERE ALLOWED. USSR,
MAINTAINING THAT PNES DO HAVE ECONOMIC UTILITY, HAS AGREED

TO A MORATORIUM ON PNES ONLY ON CONDITION OF STRIVING FOR
EVENTUAL ACCOMMODATION WITHIN CTB TREATY. WE DO NOT
BELIEVE SUCH ACCOMMODATION WILL BE POSSIBLE, AND DO NOT
WISH ANY US ACTION TO SUGGEST CONTINUING US INTEREST IN
PNE APPLICATIONS.

4. REQUEST EMBOFF DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH GEN. KENNETH
FIELDS WHO IS SERVING WITH THE BOARD OF ADVISERS FOR THIS
PROJECT AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN, AND IS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE
CAIRO ON FEBRUARY 13 OR 14, AS WELL AS WITH LAWRENCE LIVER-
MORE LABORATORY EXPERT JOHN TOMAN. BOTH WILL BE ATTENDING
MEETING IN CAIRO TO DISCUSS QATTARA PROJECT ON FEBRUARY
15. MR. RICHARD CARLSON, FROM THE LAWRENCE LIVERMORE
LABORATORY, WILL ALSO SERVE AS A CONSULTANT AND WILL
VISIT THE EGYPTIAN SITE SOMETIME THIS SPRING. ALL
INVOLVED SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT: (A) USG CONTINUES TO
BELIEVE QATTARA PROJECT CANNOT BE UNDERTAKEN USING NUCLEAR
EXPLOSIVES WITHOUT VIOLATING LTBT; (B) PARTICIPATION OF
US LABORATORY PERSONNEL IN THE QATTARA FEASIBILITY STUDY
DOES NOT IMPLY ANY COMMITMENT BY THE USG TO PARTICIPATE
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IN THE PROJECT ITSELF OR TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH IT IN ANY
WAY SHOULD THE PROJECT EVER BE UNDERTAKEN;(C) PRESENT
PARTICIPATION IS THE RESULT OF A PRIOR COMMITMENT WHICH
IS BEING HONORED DESPITE CURRENT EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE
CESSATION OF ALL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS AND (D) PARTICIPATION
IS SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASSURING CAREFUL AND ACCURATE
ANALYSIS FOR QATTARA STUDY.

5. EMBASSY SHOULD ALSO ADVISE EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS OF US
POSITION ON PNE TECHNOLOGY AND SENSITIVITY TO ISSUE IN
LIGHT OF ONGOING CTB NEGOTIATIONS. TALKING POINTS FOR
THIS PURPOSE WILL BE PROVIDED SEPTEL. VANCE

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